

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT **UPDATE**

July 1998

New state coordinator named at VDES



This past June, Governor Jim Gilmore appointed Michael Cline to head the Virginia Department of Emergency Services as State Coordinator.

Through his 26 years with the agency, Cline has served in a number of positions, including Director of Operations. As a member of the State Disaster Response Team, he has worked 16 Presidentially declared disasters, including

Hurricanes Agnes and Fran.

Cline said, "I appreciate the support I've received in the past from my local government counterparts and from the VDES staff. I look forward to our future efforts to make a great emergency management system even better. I think we'll have the opportunity, under the Gilmore Administration, to make great strides and I know I can depend on the emergency services commu-

nity to be a part of that development. We're currently working on several new initiatives in the realms of mitigation, terrorism preparedness and disaster response and recovery. I invite people to call me or their regional coordinator with input and ideas for these and other areas that need attention."

Call Michael Cline at 804/897-6501, e-mail: mcline.des@state.va.us

Franklin County stresses safety in schools

by Claude Webster

Franklin County Emergency Services Coordinator

The responsibilities of emergency managers to their jurisdictional population extend to far greater distances than just preparation for the "big storm" or the "natural disaster." They include all aspects of public safety where there is potential for injury or harm to the citizens of the community. One of the more recent concerns regarding safety and protection is with local school systems.

The Franklin County Department of Public Safety, which had previously developed and presented programs to the elementary schools regarding severe storm and tornado safety, focused on the theme of school-related violence. With the advent of publicity surrounding the accounts of assaults and attacks on students and teachers around the nation, the reports motivated us to review our policies and recognize just how vulnerable we were. We developed a program exclusively for administrators and faculty to assist them in early recognition of potential problems with the hope that

serious incidents can be averted.

The core of the program focused on five basic topics: Definitions Between Terrorism and Violent Actions; Reasons For Violent Actions; What Are the Dangers; Certain Indicators to Look For; and What Can Be Done to Reduce the Risks.

The first task was to instruct administrators and faculty about the risks involved with violent action. Since eliminating risks entirely is an unrealistic goal, the central point of the program was how to reduce associated risks by recognizing indicators and then developing associated policies, plans and strategic methods.

The program followed a "show and tell" format during which the facilitator presented the dangers associated with violence through examples from knives and bombs to how firearms can be concealed. Also included in the program were lessons on how to recognize situations or behaviors that can indicate potential violence. The effectiveness of an evacuation versus a shelter-in-place response, based on scenario-oriented dilemmas, was another popular topic of

discussion. Evacuation methods, both civilian and military — as well as the highlights of open air shelter opportunities — were reviewed during the course.

The last subject focused on the need for definitive plans and the need to exercise those plans, not if, but before an incident propels an area into the media spotlight.

Violence of the magnitude exhibited in other regions has yet to ripple the tranquil waters of this area, but when it does manage to cross the peaceful threshold, hopefully, those most affected will be better prepared to respond. Borrowing from the popular quote, "It takes a whole village to raise a child," it also takes a whole village to make sure the children are safe.

For a copy of the program syllabus, call Claude Webster at 540/483-3091.

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E911 implementation presents challenges today

"It's the horror we all fear. You're at home alone and suddenly a searing pain rips through your chest, paralyzing you. Disoriented, you struggle to reach the telephone and dial 911. As you gasp the words 'Help, heart attack,' you collapse to the floor unconscious.

How can anyone help you without your name and address? The answer is enhanced 911, a highly sophisticated emergency communications system that is helping save lives in Virginia."

Lifeline, Fall/Winter 1987

Over ten years have passed since the above article was published in the VDES magazine, *Lifeline*. It introduced E911 — a communications technology that was cutting-edge at that time — to Virginia's emergency services community. Today, it would be difficult to find someone who is not sold on this life-saving system.

As of late March this year, 52 counties and 43 cities have implemented E911, with the 911 user tax ranging from 25 cents up to \$2.50.

Unlike many states, Virginia does not mandate E911 for its jurisdictions and has avoided imposing a statewide user tax on wireline E911. Instead, it allows the locality to set an E911 user tax based on projected installation and maintenance costs, which can include everything from hardware purchases to staffing needs.

Putting a wireline-based E911 system into place is still a challenging process, however, and the emergence of wireless technology has spawned a new set of issues.

Wireline E911: User Tax

New Kent County is the latest addition to the list of jurisdictions that use wireline E911. For Emergency Services Coordinator Larry Gallaher, the process was not easy, but it



was well worth the effort.

The county enacted its E911 tax in the mid-1980s. "A lot of localities began with basic 911; New Kent did not," said Gallaher. "We decided in 1986 we would provide E911 because it's a service to our citizens and it clearly expedites service to them. Any time you enact a tax, however, it's an issue. Some of the opposition felt that some of the very poor people wouldn't be able to afford the tax."

The New Kent County Board of Supervisors monitored the process throughout, making final decisions regarding how the tax money was spent and seeking extensive feedback from county residents about the expenditures.

Vendors and Hardware

In 1990, the county began to research manufacturers and examine what other counties had done with their E911 systems. "We're a small jurisdiction, so we knew we couldn't start out with some high-dollar Community Alert System, but we wanted to make sure we got good quality and wanted equipment with a proven track record,"

said Gallaher.

The county sought a vendor with experience in Virginia that would be responsive to client needs such as making parts available in a prompt fashion, or simply providing good, friendly customer

service. "We interviewed vendors, researched who had what, and talked to users in Hopewell and Prince George County, to name a few," said Gallaher. "We based our decision largely on the experiences of other people. We were offered deals — new 'stuff' and new technology — but if you don't go out and cruise a little bit and ask people who use the equipment, you're really fooling yourself."

It took the county about two years to decide on the hardware and another year of working with the vendor to fine-tune the system configuration.

Naming Roads

Because E911's trademark feature is its ability to ID both caller and location, jurisdictions are required to name roads for this feature to work. "One of the most controversial things you can do is name roads," said Gallaher. "We started naming the streets, at least on paper, back around 1980 or so. The E911 thing put the road-naming in gear."

Public debate cropped up regarding local traditions and personal passions about road names and as well as what to

name segments of roads running through more than one jurisdiction. Further, county standards specify any road with two or more houses, including private roads, needs to be named and private roads require signs of a different color than public roads. The purpose of this is to assist local law enforcement distinguish between public and private property, so officers can respond within the law.

The road signs were put up and are now maintained with E911 user tax money. In April of 1993, E911 became operational, and currently, the county is fine-tuning its system to work out the bugs.

E911 Today

Because calls will occasionally get routed to dispatch centers in other jurisdictions or even other states, the county conducts an ongoing public education campaign that recommends residents periodically test their E911 number.

For emergencies such as power outages, a new technology called the Flexible Emergency Service Transfer allows E911 calls to be rerouted to West Point when the system goes down in New Kent.

Gallaher speculated on the future of telecommunications technology and the advent of wireless phones. "In 1980 in New Kent, we had one radio tower. Now there are 19 cell towers alone. What I see is a time when your telephone will probably be with you most of the time and will probably be able to locate you. I see this future as coming quicker than we may want it to."

Call Larry Gallaher at 804/966-9679 for information. (Next month: wireless E911)

HAZ MAT



Hazmat Officer selected for Tidewater area

This past May, Virginia Beach firefighter, Ray Haring, began his new job as VDES Hazardous Materials Officer for the Tidewater and south-central Virginia area. Hailing originally from Coopersburg, a small community on the fringes of Pennsylvania Dutch country, Haring went to Virginia Beach in January of 1987 to work as a full-time firefighter in a ladder company.

In a matter of 11 months, Haring became one of the first to move from firefighting to the newly developing field of hazardous materials. "I wanted to do hazmat work," he said. "It's complex and it's something very different. I felt it offered me more of a challenge than I might have received in an engine company."

Haring was one of the original members of the 12-person Virginia Beach Hazardous Materials Team, and right from the beginning, became deeply committed to its success. "I saw the opportunity to help start the team and bring it along," said Haring. Among his many achievements with the team, Haring worked to secure needed equipment and wrote its Standard Operating Procedure. He has been the team's training officer since 1989.

Haring observed, "The most important aspect of training is identifying the hazardous

materials in a jurisdiction and planning for them. The terrorism piece of the hazmat puzzle is becoming more important every day. This is because, in a sense, a terrorist incident is a hazmat incident perpetrated by a criminal. The bottom line in this situation, and in any other hazmat incident, is to make sure safety of the first responders is the number one priority."

In the 11 years Haring has been in the field, he feels the focus has changed for the better. "We've brought

common sense back into

the equation," he said. "Ten years ago, we put on an encapsulated suit for

every incident. Now we've realized we can use lower levels of protection. We've come back to a balanced risk assessment and have become more realistic regarding how to train for and manage a response."

His vision? "I plan to bring the hazmat people in Area Seven to the highest level of preparedness, prevention and response capability. My goals are to provide the teams with the resources and the training programs that will move them into the new century able to safely, effectively and efficiently mitigate hazardous materials and emergencies."

Contact Ray Haring at 757/363-3891, e-mail hazmatvb@aol.com



Petersburg hosts public education conference

This August 7-9, Petersburg plays host to the fifth annual Fire Life Safety Education Conference, *The Magic of Education*, held in Richmond. If you're a public educator in any field, the conference will inspire you and renew your creative energy. "Not only fire departments, but any nonprofit organization or school system can make all of these ideas work for them," said Carolyn Sanford, conference organizer and the Petersburg Fire Department's public educator.

The keynote speaker is Vina Drennan, who brings a powerful perspective regarding the vital importance of public education campaigns. The widow of a New York firefighter who died battling an apartment fire blaze, she will talk about the essential role public education plays in helping to prevent tragedies that impact both victims and responders and their families.

Other classes address inventive ways to raise funds for your organization, how to effectively write grants, working with the media, partnering with private-sector groups, college fire safety, techniques for teaching preschool children fire and life safety lessons and more. A session about at-risk children focuses on ways to get your fire and life safety message to the children who may not have full-time adult supervision.

The conference offers both valuable information and invaluable opportunities to network with professionals in a field that is essential to the public safety mission. For information, call Lisa Porter at 804/520-9387 or Patti Witt at 804/733-2657.

Project Impact comes to Virginia

Mitigation took front and center stage in Southwest Virginia this past May, when FEMA invited the Roanoke Valley to participate in Project Impact. The Roanoke Valley, which includes Roanoke County, the cities of Roanoke and Salem and the town of Vinton, is one of the first communities in the nation to become a part of this initiative.

Project Impact: Building a Disaster-Resistant Community, is a national initiative that emphasizes moving from a "response and recovery" approach to disasters, to one that emphasizes preparedness and "disaster management." VDES will work with FEMA, the Roanoke Valley, and its local public and private partners to implement new strategies for reducing the impact of disasters in the region.

"For a number of years, we have worked with FEMA to assist communities across the state in recovery efforts after a disaster," said VDES State Coordinator Michael Cline. "We are now ready to work with FEMA in advance of disasters to help build stronger and safer communities in the Commonwealth."

Training Calendar

Operations Division

Reservist EIS Training and VEOC Tabletop Exercise

July 8
September 9
Richmond

Exercise Design

July 8-9
Leesburg
August 11-12
Richmond

EOC Management and Operations

July 14-16
Rockingham County

Status Assessment Facilitator's Workshop

July 27-28
Danville
August 26-27
Culpeper

Mass Fatalities Incident Management

August 18-20
Waynesboro

Coordinator's Briefing

August 26-27
Smyth County

For information, call the VDES Training Office at 804/897-6559

Technological Hazards Division

Hazardous Materials Incident Management

September 21-23
Virginia Beach
For information, call Ron Hargrave at 804/897-6573

Emergency Response to Terrorism: Basic Concepts

July 18-19
Salem

Public Safety Response to Terrorism: Awareness

August 14
Lynchburg
August 28
Abingdon

Public Safety Response to Terrorism: Awareness

One class offered on September 30 and October 7
South Hill

Public Safety Response to Terrorism: Management Considerations

August 15-16
Lynchburg
August 29-30
Abingdon

For information on the Terrorism classes, call Mike Schlemmer at 804/897-6568

CAMEO Workshop

July 25-26
Hanover
September 1-2
Campbell County
For information about the Cameo class in Campbell County, call Mike Milnor at 804/592-9540

EPCRA/CERCLA Release Reporting Workshop

September 10
Newport News
For information, call George Roarty at 804/897-6574

Other Training

Underground Storage Tanks

September 3
Richmond
For information, call Christine Coggins at 804/828-4548

Sites of interest

To check out the latest on hurricane research, visit NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory Web site. Click on the Hurricane Research Division icon. The URL is <http://www.aoml.noaa.gov>

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Mitigation fact sheets for floods, windstorms and other hazards can be printed out from FEMA's "How to ..." mitigation Web site. Include them in your press kits or send them to your local schools, businesses or media outlets. Go to <http://www.fema.gov/MIT/how2.htm>

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If your organization needs a media crisis communication plan, check out a sample plan at <http://www.niu.edu/newsplace/crisis.html>. Then visit the "NewsPlace" Web site, a wildly inventive collection of informative links for news, government, resource and reference tools and more. You'll definitely bookmark this one at <http://www.niu.edu/newsplace/>



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